

Mandevilla sanderi 'Sundaville Red' var. Sunmandecrim

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Mandevilla sanderi "Sundaville Red" var. Sunmandecrim

Launched on the local market about two years ago, this Mandevilla – commonly called the red bush Dipladenia – has been a phenomenal hit, and is already gracing many gardens in frost-free regions of the country. It is a near perfect pot or container plant for outdoor positions, flowering for many months on end from spring through to autumn. Whilst it is often called a bush or shrub Mandevilla, it's essentially a light climber that can be maintained in a bushy form by removing all the new shoots that have a tendency to twine and climb. Trained onto a support or trellis the plants develop into a vertical wall of spectacular colour. Whichever way you might choose to grow them, they develop a mass of dark, waxy green leaves and produce an abundance of funnel-shaped flowers approximately 7cm across. The rich, velvety-red colour is what really sets this plant apart from its more common pink or white flowered relatives. The sheer intensity of colour and hue and the abundance of flowers make sure the plant always stands out a mile away. Surely a 'must have' plant for every garden that is fortunate enough to be able to grow a Sundaville Red!

Mandevillas in all their different species and forms originate from Central and South America, whilst this particular red form is of hybrid origin, bred by a commercial plant breeder. This careful breeding and selection process ensures superior garden performance from an outstanding plant. Grow them in a rich, well-drained soil mixture in full sun or light shade, preferably in pots, containers, window boxes or planters. They somehow enjoy the confines of growing in a pot. This also affords gardeners in colder regions the mobility of moving plants into protected positions during the heart of winter. Feed or fertilise regularly during the growing season with a balanced, general-purpose plant food that is high in potassium (K). This promotes good quality blooms in vast quantities. Experience has shown that a granular fertiliser with a 3:1:5 formulation, applied every 6 weeks from August to April works exceptionally well. Be sure to read the instructions first and apply at the recommended rate.

Potted Mandevillas are stand-alone specimen plants and should not be cluttered with other competing growth and vegetation. A mulch of decorative gravel or pebbles sets them off to perfection and ensures ideal growing conditions. The roots are thick, fleshy and tuberous, storing water for dry periods, an indication that over watering and poor drainage can cause serious problems. Lift pots and containers off flat surfaces that might impair drainage and place them on 'pot feet'. The sticky, milky sap is a mild skin irritant.

All in all this is a truly wonderful plant that is going to make a huge impression for many years to come.